

Why Am I Receiving This Notice?

West County Wastewater protects public health and the environment by safely and responsibly collecting, treating and disposing of wastewater. WCW is proposing a 5-year Environmental Quality (Sewer Use) Charge increase.

The need for a rate adjustment was evaluated by an independent financial firm that conducted a rate and fee analysis and proposed a 10-year financial plan. WCW is dedicated to operating as efficiently and prudently as possible to minimize financial impacts on ratepayers.

A copy of the WCW Environmental Quality (Sewer Use) Charge Rate Study is available online at www.wc wd.org/rates-fees or by contacting WCW at (510) 222-6700.

The Environmental Quality (Sewer Use) Charge is collected from residential and commercial customers on the property tax bill. Industrial customers are billed

on a monthly basis. Customers who may be affected by these changes are receiving this notice and are invited to provide feedback that the WCW Board of Directors will consider prior to voting on the proposed Environmental Quality (Sewer Use) Charge rates.

Why Are Changes Necessary?

A recent rate study conducted by an independent financial firm determined that WCW needs to adjust the Environmental Quality (Sewer Use) Charge in order to generate enough revenue to pay for the capital improvement program including energy upgrades, pipeline replacement, and address deferred maintenance.



AGING SEWER COLLECTION AND TREATMENT SYSTEM

Much of WCW's system is aging and in need of repair or replacement. Many of the existing facilities were developed in the 1970s and are at or near the end of their useful life.

Many improvements and upgrades have been deferred and need to be addressed immediately. The rate adjustment would allow WCW to catch up with maintenance needed now and plan for future needs. Learn more about necessary improvement and maintenance projects in this Notice or online at www.wc wd.org/about-us/plans-documents.

Información importante – concierne a los cambios propuestos a las tarifas de aguas residuales. Si desea recibir este aviso en otro idioma, por favor comuníquese con West County Wastewater al (510) 222-6700.

If you would like to receive this notice in a different language, please contact West County Wastewater at (510) 222-6700.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION CONCERNING PROPOSED CHANGES TO WASTEWATER RATES



WEST COUNTY WASTEWATER

2910 Hilltop Drive
Richmond, CA 94806

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING CONCERNING PROPOSED CHANGES TO WASTEWATER RATES

Wednesday, June 16, 2021 | 6:30 p.m.

Via teleconference.

To participate, visit: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87340953651> or call: 1-669-900-6833 | Meeting ID: 873 4095 3651

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that West County Wastewater (WCW) is considering an Environmental Quality (Sewer Use) Charge rate increase. You are receiving this Notice because our records indicate that you are an owner of a property or occupant within the WCW service area. This Notice describes the proposed changes and explains how you can participate in the rate setting process. If adopted, the proposed rates would become effective **July 1, 2021**, and would be adjusted on **July 1 of 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025**.



A Public Hearing will be conducted per California Constitution Article XIII D, Section 6 (also known as "Proposition 218"). This notice is being sent to all owners of record whose parcels receive wastewater service from WCW or who would be subject to the proposed rates changes. The term "Property Owner" and/or "Customer" as used in this Notice includes any affected person or entity that owns a property within the WCW service area and who is responsible for payment of wastewater service charges.

At the date, time and location specified above, the WCW Board of Directors will conduct a Public Hearing to consider proposed adjustments to the Environmental Quality (Sewer Use) Charge. The proposed adjustments will be applicable to all parcels that receive service from WCW. All members of the public are invited to attend the hearing at the date and time above. Additionally, all property owners of record may submit a written protest to the proposed rate changes.



WEST COUNTY WASTEWATER

Please refer to the "How Can I Participate?" section of this document for instructions on submitting a formal written protest against the proposed action. If you would like to receive this notice in a different language, please contact West County Wastewater at (510) 222-6700.

More information about the proposed rate changes, including the rate study, is available at www.wc wd.org.

Staff are also available to answer questions. You can call (510) 222-6700 or email info@wc wd.org.

Did you know?

As a public agency, WCW is not legally allowed to make a profit. According to state law, WCW cannot charge more than the actual cost of providing wastewater service.



Providing Safe, Reliable Service

Upgrading and maintaining the system

The aging wastewater system is in need of upgrades and repairs in order to keep it operating efficiently, effectively and safely. Planning ahead and making upgrades now will reduce costs later.

WCW's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to maintain and improve the system includes an expenditure of **\$190 million** over 10 years.

Capital projects include upgrades to maintenance facilities, the collection system, and the solids handling equipment. The CIP will also address **\$66 million** in comprehensive energy and sustainability upgrade projects that are expected to reduce WCW's energy expenses by approximately **\$2 million per year**.



Learn more about some of WCW's key projects that need immediate attention below.



Comprehensive Energy and Sustainability Upgrades Project

– WCW's energy project would reduce energy consumption and expenses and improve operational efficiency by replacing and modernizing equipment and infrastructure at the WCW Water Quality Resource and Recovery Plant. This includes updates to the systems that generate power from biogas (cogeneration infrastructure), digesters, thermal drying facilities, and biosolids management. The project would also install solar photovoltaic (PV) generation facilities at several WCW facilities.

Lift Station Upgrades

– WCW is performing upgrades at various lift stations located throughout its service area. The improvements include civil, structural, electrical, pumps, instruments, and backup power at the Lakeside, McBryde, Park, Sobrante and Pinole lift stations. These upgrades will enhance reliability of service and provide more efficient transfer of wastewater.

Priority Pipes Project

– Work is underway to fix 15,000 feet of sewers in the most deteriorated condition, with a focus on the North Richmond area. These repairs will increase safety and reliability of wastewater service.

Force Mains

– More than 30 percent of the pipelines that transport wastewater are in need of repair or replacement. Failing to make these improvements could cause an increase in sewer spills, putting the community and the environment at risk.



Understanding Your Wastewater Rates

WCW collects most of its rate revenue from residential and commercial customers on the property tax bill. Industrial customers are billed on a monthly basis. WCW's method of billing follows standard industry practice for wastewater utilities.



RESIDENTIAL CUSTOMERS (SINGLE-FAMILY, MULTI-FAMILY AND MOBILE HOMES)

Residential customers are billed a flat rate determined on an equivalent dwelling unit (EDU) basis, which reflects the typical volume and strength of the wastewater generated by a single-family home. A single-family residence is 1 EDU. Multi-family and mobile home residences are billed at a slightly lower rate.



COMMERCIAL CUSTOMERS

Commercial customers are billed based on the prior year water consumption. Low water users are charged a minimum bill that is equal to one single-family residential household, or one EDU.



INDUSTRIAL CUSTOMERS

Industrial customers are billed based on water consumption and measured biological oxygen demand (BOD) and suspended solids (SS) contributed to the Water Quality and Resource Recovery Plant. Low water users are charged a minimum bill that is equal to one single-family residential household, or one EDU.

WCW charges additional service-based fees that are not impacted by this proposal, such as sewer permits, plan approval and connection fees. For more information, go to wcwd.org/rates-fees.

Proposed Environmental Quality Charges

The rate study proposes five years of rate adjustments beginning July 1, 2021, and on July 1 of 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025. The proposed rate changes and 10-year financial plan would provide WCW with sufficient revenues to fund the improvement projects required to reverse the impacts of years of deferred maintenance, while maintaining financial stability. The adjustments in the first four years allow WCW to cover the near-term increase in spending on maintenance and upgrades.

Billing Unit	Current Charge Per Year	Proposed Charge Effective 7/1/21	Proposed Charge Effective 7/1/22	Proposed Charge Effective 7/1/23	Proposed Charge Effective 7/1/24	Proposed Charge Effective 7/1/25
SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL						
Flat Rate	\$639.00	\$674.00	\$711.00	\$750.00	\$791.00	\$815.00
MULTI-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL						
Flat Rate	\$557.00	\$588.00	\$620.00	\$654.00	\$690.00	\$711.00
MOBILE HOME						
Flat Rate	\$557.00	\$588.00	\$620.00	\$654.00	\$690.00	\$711.00
COMMERCIAL						
Minimum Charge	\$639.00	\$674.00	\$711.00	\$750.00	\$791.00	\$815.00
Domestic Strength*	\$6.84	\$7.22	\$7.62	\$8.04	\$8.48	\$8.73
High Strength*	\$11.52	\$12.15	\$12.82	\$13.53	\$14.27	\$14.70
INDUSTRIAL						
Minimum Charge	\$639.00	\$674.00	\$711.00	\$750.00	\$791.00	\$815.00
Flow Charge*	\$4.40	\$4.64	\$4.90	\$5.17	\$5.45	\$5.61
BOD Charge**	\$0.45	\$0.47	\$0.50	\$0.53	\$0.56	\$0.58
SS Charge**	\$0.54	\$0.57	\$0.60	\$0.63	\$0.66	\$0.68

* Flow is billed per thousand gallons. ** BOD and SS are billed per pound.

How Will This Affect Me?

If approved, a single-family residential customer would see an increase of \$35 in the first year on their Environmental Quality (Sewer Use) Charge, collected with property taxes. Charges for multi-family and mobile home customers would increase \$31 in the first year.



How Can I Participate?

WCW welcomes your participation as the Board of Directors considers the changes explained in this Notice. If you have questions or comments about the proposed rates you can:



Call or visit us online – You can view the WCW Environmental Quality (Sewer Use) Charge Rate Study and other information online at wcwd.org/rates-fees or contact WCW at (510) 222-6700 with questions.



Write – Property owners who would be affected by the proposed rate changes may file a written protest against the proposed rate adjustments. Only one protest per parcel will be counted. To be counted toward a majority protest, any written protest must be received by WCW no later than the end of the Public Hearing on **June 16, 2021**. Emailed or faxed protests will **NOT** be accepted. Written protests can be mailed to: **West County Wastewater, 2910 Hilltop Drive, Richmond, CA 94806**



Attend the Public Hearing – **Wednesday, June 16, 2021, at 6:30 p.m.**, via teleconference; <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87340953651> or call: **1-669-900-6833**, Meeting ID: **873 4095 3651**. Members of the public are welcome to attend the Public Hearing and will have an opportunity to speak and give testimony regarding the proposed changes; however, only written protests will count toward a majority protest. Written protests must be received before the conclusion of the Public Hearing.

Public Hearing Process

At the Public Hearing, WCW will hear and consider all comments to the proposed rate adjustments. Upon conclusion of the hearing, the WCW Board of Directors will evaluate the protests and consider the adoption of the proposed changes to the wastewater rates. Protests submitted by email or other electronic means do not count as formal written protests. Oral comments do not qualify as a formal protest unless accompanied by a written protest. WCW is authorized to adopt the proposed rates if written protests against the proposed changes, as outlined above, do not represent at least a majority of owners of identified parcels impacted by the proposed rates. If adopted as proposed, the rate changes would take effect beginning **July 1, 2021**, and on **July 1 of 2022, 2023, 2024 and 2025**.

This information will be made available in alternative formats upon request, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act, by calling (510) 222-6700. Requests for disability-related modifications or accommodations required to facilitate meeting participation, including requests for auxiliary aids, services or interpreters, require different lead times, ranging from five business days to two weeks. Please provide as much advance notice as possible in order to assure availability.